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Garry Winogrand, Family Intimacies

Photographs from the Adrienne Judith Lubeau-Winogrand Collection



JANUARY 29 TO APRIL 3, 2015

JOEL AND LILA HARNETT MUSEUM OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND MUSEUMS

INTRODUCTION

WE ARE PLEASED TO PRESENT THIS exhibition of photographs by Garry Winogrand (American, 1928-1984). A photographer of New York City and of American life from the 1950s through the early 1980s, the content and dynamic style of his images placed him among the most influential photographers of the period. The legendary curator and critic John Szarkowski called him the central photographer of his generation, and Winogrand is widely considered one of the greatest photographers of the twentieth century.

The artist grew up in the Bronx, New York, and studied painting at The City College of New York, and painting and photography at Columbia University in New York in 1948. By 1955, his photographs were included in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In the 1960s he began photographing on the streets of New York and branching out by traveling through America exploring and documenting media events and the public after being awarded two Guggenheim Fellowships in 1964 and again in 1969. His career spanned thirty years producing thousands of images, five books, and numerous exhibitions throughout the United States and abroad.

This exhibition features a selection of personal, never exhibited, photographs from the collection of his first wife, Adrienne Judith Lubeau-Winogrand. Selected from her private collection, the images focus on an aspect of the artist not seen in his usually dark, gritty city scenes and urban landscapes. They reveal Winogrand's relation to his family — his wife Adrienne, his daughter Laurie, and his son Ethan — and express a side of the artist rarely seen in exhibitions of his work.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Adrienne Judith Lubeau-Winogrand for so graciously agreeing to lend her photographs to the museum and for working closely with the curators, Joe Troncale and Richard Waller, in making this exhibition a reality. Organized by the University of Richmond Museums, the exhibition is made possible in part with support from the Louis S. Booth Arts Fund.

RICHARD WALLER

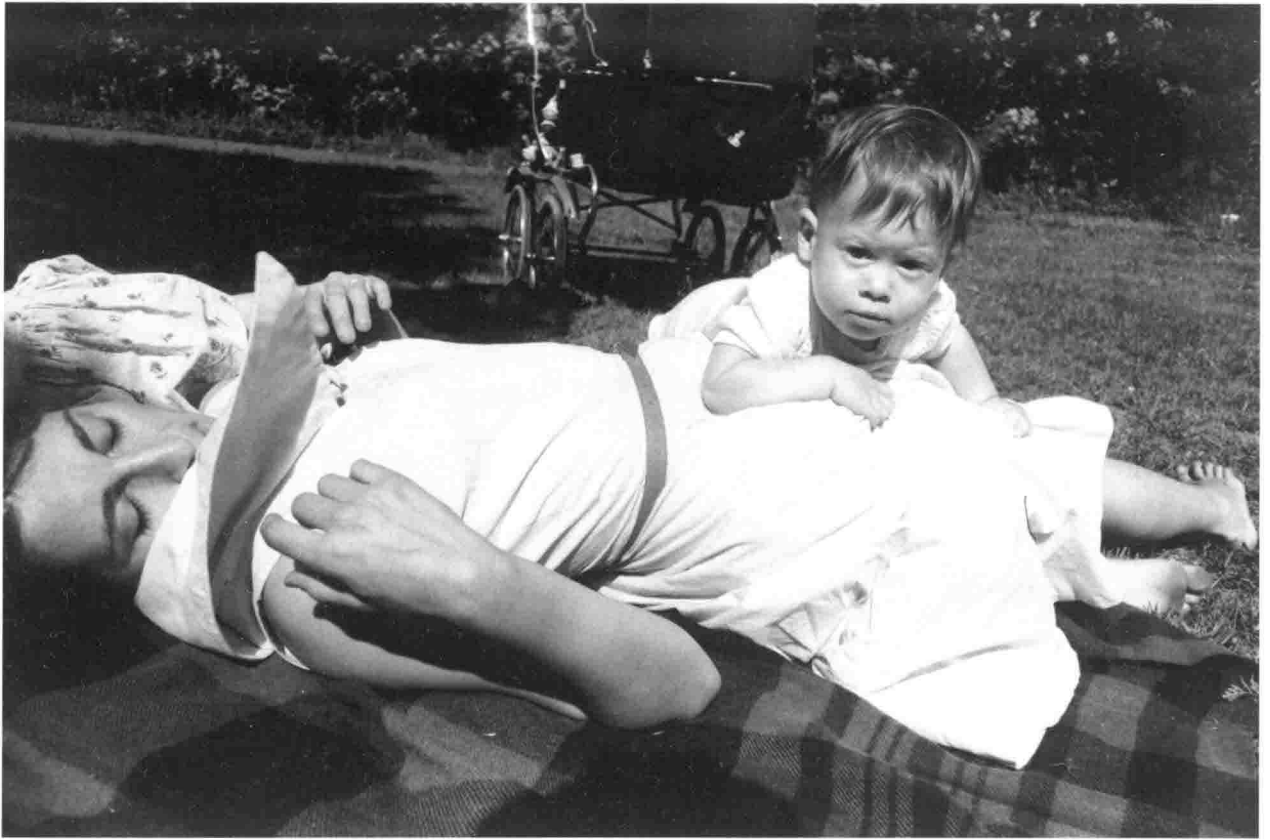
Executive Director

University of Richmond Museums

GARRY WINOGRAND, FAMILY INTIMACIES

THE RECENT TRAVELING RETROSPECTIVE of the widely recognized American photographer Garry Winogrand has generated renewed interest in one of the great talents of the twentieth century. Winogrand was a student of America. He loved the density of the streets of New York City, but also traveled widely to discover and photograph other parts of the United States. The world, as he saw it, was messy and that is what he shot. He didn't want to make it neat. His images invite perceptual response and interpretation in a particular way. For example, many interpret Winogrand's later works from the point of view of the shifting values and moods

of America in the 1960s and 1970s. They see the "value" of his work from the perspective of the Vietnam War and Kent State, the Civil Rights Movement, Watergate, and the numbing effect of all those crushing revelations, doubts, and disappointments that streamed into millions of living rooms on the nightly news. However, like most great photographers, Winogrand took pictures primarily to find out what things looked like in photographs, not to make judgements about them. "Point and shoot, point and shoot" was his mantra. It was natural and not complex. While photographing, he didn't see pictures, he saw faces.



Garry Winogrand, *Ethan Climbing on Adrienne on the Grass in the Park*, 1959, gelatin silver print on paper, 9 x 13 1/2 inches, Collection of Adrienne Judith Lubeau-Winogrand © The Estate of Garry Winogrand, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

The photographs in this exhibition were taken before the tumultuous years of the 1960s and 1970s. Much of his later work reveals a people seemingly preoccupied with their own weighty monologues. In contrast, the images here capture moments spontaneous and serene, scenes from the photographer's own inner space. They are products of his life with his first wife, Adrienne, and their children Laurie and Ethan. It is revealing that Winogrand printed three hundred photographs of his family and gave them to Adrienne as a gift. They reflect a joyful, uncomplicated participation in a life that endures, in spite of the fact that Adrienne once confessed feeling that her late husband only related to her and everyone else through the lens of a camera. He was already shooting without restraint in the 1950s, and Adrienne has said that, at times, she felt as if she were married to a one-eyed creature, a creature

that experienced everything through a lens rather than himself.

Efforts to get Winogrand to talk about his work often elicited responses much like the photographs he made in the last twenty-four years of his life. Seemingly, he popped off his answers like he compulsively popped off thousands upon thousands of photographs. Shooting constantly, he was outlandishly prolific. Hounded by a backlog of undeveloped images and far preferring to shoot rather than print, he fell into a habit of leaving the process of editing and printing his work to others. After his sudden death at fifty-six, more than 6,000 rolls of undeveloped film were left behind. He just didn't have time for such things. His mentor, Robert Frank, told him that he wasn't taking photographs, he was "taking a census."

Winogrand wanted to simply shoot pictures rather than talk about them. To him photographs

were nothing but illusions, “Illusions of a literal description,” he once said. Filled with a glib, street-smart savvy, they leave viewers with feelings of ambiguity and spontaneity but no further expectations of the photographer. In an interview in 1974, he said, “You know, once the photograph exists, it has no relation to what was photographed.” Winogrand wasn’t interested in the grand interpretive schemes of the critic. He was an artist who wanted to learn as much about the form as possible, as quickly as possible. “I’m only trying to learn about photography” he said. His images are audacious, rich in photographic detail and eminently readable. When introducing Winogrand at MIT, also in 1974, Todd Papageorge called his work “. . . a photography without captions, without metaphysics, a photography without apology.” In other words, simply art.

The images in this exhibition are not, as some see in his later work, auguries of America’s existential awakenings to its own doubts and fears of a cultural cataclysm. Instead, Adrienne, Laurie, and Ethan elegantly fill frames, most of which were taken during the 1950s. These are not dark musings into the fate of American society and its values, nor spontaneous flashes of public emotion and style that typify his work during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The images here belie Winogrand’s often quoted “I just take pictures.” What many would later see as the seedy, gritty, dark shadows of the street-smart photographer’s touch in the last twenty-four years of his work dissolve into gentle, tender chiaroscuro: the embrace of a loving husband and father who is a gifted artist. These images reflect an intimate orientation to his family and express a side of the artist rarely seen in exhibitions of his work. Here is none of the aggressive, voracious lens that seems to pounce on a subject in unguarded moments, eliciting a range of ambiguous feelings. In these images, Winogrand seizes upon an essential quality of intimacy that is no less surprising and rewarding. The photographer is not looking for something or for how something might look in a photograph. The aesthetic in these photographs is found the instant we recognize Winogrand’s natural brilliance through the spontaneous and playful photographic details of intimacy itself. The world is not messy here; it is a place of

self-discovery. For example, in the photograph of Adrienne holding Laurie twelve hours after her birth, Winogrand, the new father, resonates quietly through his lens, joining his wife’s awe and joy in holding and caressing the fragile child in her arms. This quality is echoed in two photographs of Adrienne holding Laurie at one month old. The second of these contains remarkable nuances: Adrienne tilts her head slightly into the light, her hair glistens. Radiantly peaceful, her face comes out of the shadows to join Laurie’s. Her hand, as well as the blanket, glows. Mother and daughter seem lost in each other’s embrace as Laurie’s delicate small hands seem to respond to her mother’s gentle but protective caress. Here are extraordinary photographic complexities, without ambiguity.

This selection of photographs from Adrienne Judith Lubeau-Winogrand’s private collection introduces us into the world of the artist from a unique vantage point and complements the recent retrospective of Winogrand’s photographs that traveled from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Jeu de Paume National Gallery in Paris.

JOE TRONCALE

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COVER: Garry Winogrand, *Adrienne Holding Laurie, One Month Old*, September 1956, gelatin silver print on paper, 13 1/4 x 5 1/2 inches, Collection of Adrienne Judith Lubeau-Winogrand © The Estate of Garry Winogrand, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco



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